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Stop, Collaborate & Listen: How the Librarian/Publisher Relationship Can Facilitate the Development of the Information Literacy Curriculum

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Abstract

A librarian from the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and the Library Communications Manager at Taylor & Francis Group partnered to launch a collaborative information literacy pilot program focusing on assisting FGCU students and faculty navigate and understand the scholarly publishing process. This article describes how the idea was created, as well as steps involved in developing the publishing toolkit to help FGCU patrons. An overview of the pilot program was presented during the 2015 Charleston Conference as a poster session.

Keywords: library, publisher, collaboration, information literacy, Taylor & Francis Group, Florida Gulf Coast University

Introduction

The last decade has seen immense growth in information sources and information output, which in turn has changed the way students and researchers find and use information. Following this, we've also seen a shift from the traditional "librarian as expert" role to the "librarian as teacher" role, where the imparting of information literacy skills and their embedding into the curriculum is recognized as a primary responsibility of today's academic librarian.

Simultaneously there's been a growing sense that cultivating the librarian/publisher relationship is important to the success of librarians, publishers, and researchers alike. The scholarly landscape is rapidly changing, and publishers and librarians can support each other and their mutual patrons in the changing climate. Publishers now offer more than just content – they're offering author and researcher support via publishing tips, expansive post-publication self-promotion tips, library support, and more.

As the importance of these partnerships has become apparent, FGCU and Taylor & Francis Group are partnering to create a toolkit of instructional materials and webinars aimed at

helping both students and faculty researchers navigate the scholarly publishing process.

Motivation

In March 2015, Taylor & Francis Group held the inaugural meeting of Dialog, a forum for librarians and Taylor & Francis staff to discuss the key issues and questions facing libraries. The first meeting, held in Portland, Oregon during the 2015 ACRL Conference, brought together 10 librarians and representatives from Taylor & Francis Group and focused on three key topics:

- Information literacy: supporting teaching, learning, and research
- Renegotiating the library's role within the university
- Evaluating the changing role of the library

Conversations at this first Dialog meeting largely focused on information literacy and the evolving role of the librarian in this area of university programming. In particular, Rebecca Donlan described the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)-mandated Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and how her library



positioned itself to play an extensive part in both the conception and implementation of the project.

Over the course of the next few hours, it became apparent that academic publishers like Taylor & Francis Group need to invest in and understand the library's role in information literacy programs. If FGCU's QEP aims to teach students to communicate effectively and to analyze research and information so they can make insightful and logical conclusions, while Taylor & Francis aims to engage students with their content and to encourage students and researchers to contribute to and use scholarly journals, isn't there a common goal?

The conversation continued even after the Dialog meeting ended, and we realized yes, we do have a common goal: educating "customers" – in this instance, students and researchers – so they fully understand the publishing process and how to write and publish scholarly content.

Collaborating on a program aimed at improving student and faculty knowledge and awareness of academic content and the research/publishing process would allow both organizations to meet these goals simultaneously.

Information Literacy at FGCU

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is a relatively new institution – it opened in August 1997 – and from the start, information literacy has been recognized as an important goal of the school's undergraduate education programs. In fact, by 2004, information literacy was added explicitly to FGCU's revised General Education Goals and Objectives¹, and FGCU librarians – who have participated in university governance since the institution opened – have continued to build close working relationships with their teaching faculty counterparts, even serving on Senate committees involved with curriculum development.

This dedication to education and information literacy has been echoed in FGCU's most recent Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). As a university in the state of Florida, FGCU must develop and implement a QEP. SACS describes the pur-

pose of the QEP as: "Engaging the wider academic community and addressing one or more issues that contribute to institutional improvement, the plan should be focused, succinct, and limited in length. The QEP describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning."²

QEPs are intended to be implemented over a five year period and become permanently integrated into the university's processes. There is a substantial planning period in advance of the actual implementation – FGCU's current QEP will take ten years from conception to assessment.³

In fall 2011, a selection committee that included library representatives solicited ideas and topics for the QEP from across the university. The selection committee's job was to review the 40 submitted topics and identify those with the potential to appeal to and impact the entire campus community.

Anna Carlin, FGCU's Instructional Technology Librarian, submitted a proposal to develop student information literacy competency by integrating information literacy instruction and assessment into the university curriculum, pointing out that "information literacy is part of all disciplines and learning environments." Another proposal, "Writing, Critical Thinking, and Literacy across the Curriculum," was submitted by members of the English faculty.

The Steering Committee recognized that the library's proposal dovetailed neatly with the English faculty proposal, and Anna was placed on their team to further develop that proposal. (Background information on the process can be found at the FGCU QEP website⁴.) In March 2012, the Provost announced that the winning proposal would combine writing, critical thinking, and information literacy plans and was dubbed *FGCUScholars: Think. Write. Discover*. This plan would "enhance our culture of inquiry" by focusing on student writing at critical points along the progression of courses within the major, setting a baseline at Composition II and assessing improvement, as measured by modified American Association of Colleges &



Donlan & Sieck: Stop, Collaborate & Listen

Universities' (AAC&U) rubrics, in the culminating Senior Capstone Project."

FGCUScholars: Think. Write. Discover has three objectives:

1. To integrate the QEP across all four years of the student experience and in multiple general education courses and courses in the majors;
2. To identify and refine writing-intensive courses within the majors (especially gateway and research methods courses); and
3. Lastly, to develop scholarly capstone projects that provide evidence of improvement in all three areas of writing, critical thinking, and information literacy.

The QEP is intended to pervade the entire undergraduate experience, making deliberate and explicit the connections among classes like Comp II, courses in the major, and the capstone. At least half of the sections of Comp II will be revised so that themes are focused on disciplines (business, health professions, education, engineering, arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences). For students who know (or think they know) their intended major, these scholarly-focused Comp II sections offer an opportunity to begin undergraduate scholarship at an early stage. After Comp II, students will encounter the QEP three more times – at a scholarly-focused gateway course in their major, at a scholarly-enriched course within the major, and finally, in the Senior Capstone project.

The capstone is the primary vehicle for assessing student improvement in writing, critical thinking, and information literacy, and is intended to draw together all the learning that students have experienced throughout their undergraduate career at FGCU. Students will have an opportunity to share their scholarly capstone project, whether it is a performance, exhibition, or paper. FGCU spotlights student and faculty research every year in April, with a "Research Day" of poster sessions featuring the results of faculty, student, and collaborative projects. The QEP now includes an Undergraduate Student

Scholarship Support award to promote collaboration between faculty and undergraduates and to encourage undergrads to make "original intellectual or creative contribution(s) to their disciplines⁵."

As an experienced editor of two library journals, Rebecca Donlan realized the benefit of *FGCUScholars* as a training ground for future academic authors and their mentors. Although not every undergraduate researcher will go on to a career in higher education, some will. Teaching students and their faculty mentors is a mutually beneficial proposition: publishers may get more and better submissions, while students and faculty get "inside advice" about the scholarly publication process.

Information Literacy at Taylor & Francis Group

Although it's not currently called an "information literacy program," Taylor & Francis has been expanding its author and researcher services for the last few years. Marketing and Sales support staff regularly host webinars and author workshops at university campuses, and the Author Services team has released a series of infographics, brochures, and websites with tips for publishing scholarly research – resources that are applicable to students just starting out in their undergraduate programs; information that can easily be adapted to support the goals of FGCU's QEP.

Creating a Collaborative Toolkit

Once we identified this opportunity for collaboration, we began by reviewing the terms and requirements of FGCU's QEP to determine how Taylor & Francis could support the program. As writing and literacy are key elements of the QEP, we decided to focus on creating tools that would help students (as well as university faculty if interested) better understand how to find and use scholarly research and how to contribute their own research and ideas to scholarly journals.

Looking at Taylor & Francis' existing materials, we decided that a series of webinars with corresponding print materials and infographics – like cheat sheets – would be the most effective and



lasting platforms for sharing this information with our common patrons.

Next we had to create the content. We decided to focus on three central ideas: discovery, the writing and publishing process, and maximizing impact of research. Once we agreed on the major themes for the toolkit, we came up with six webinars, all with the underlying goal of providing patrons with the tools needed to navigate the scholarly research environment throughout every point of their academic and professional careers. The webinars range from platform demonstrations to a crash course in Open Access and author rights and copyright (See Table 1).

Ahead of launching the toolkit, we decided to seek out feedback from our peers. We submitted a proposal to the 2015 Charleston Conference, which was accepted as a poster session. We presented an overview of the toolkit during the Charleston Conference and had the opportunity to speak with more than 20 librarians and other vendors about the project. Feedback was largely positive, and we are now in the process of finalizing the program.

Next Steps

With the basic structure of the toolkit mapped out, we have started to create the presentations and the corresponding infographics for each webinar. We've identified gaps in the existing materials from both Taylor & Francis Group and FGCU, and we are using existing content where possible. We're also reaching out to possible guest speakers to contribute to the different sessions so the webinars include both Taylor & Francis Group staff and FGCU librarians and researchers. Finally, Taylor & Francis Group is building a website that will serve as a landing page for recordings of each webinar and links to electronic versions of all infographics and printed materials. This landing page will ensure that students and researchers can access the toolkit at any time after launch.

As of the writing of this article, the first webinar has tentatively been scheduled for April 2016, and email invitations will be sent out to students and faculty in mid-March. Posters and other announcements will be posted in the library, and we'll promote the toolkit via Taylor & Francis Group and FGCU social media channels as well.

Once the curriculum is implemented, we will monitor usage of the toolkit website page, as well as webinar attendance figures, and download figures for the infographics and webinar recordings. Finally, the project will culminate with an in-person workshop on the FGCU campus where Taylor & Francis Group staff will lead interactive workshops on how to get published and navigating the scholarly research landscape.

Conclusion (or Just the Beginning...)

So far, we can't say much about the success of this pilot program. While we received great feedback during the Charleston Conference, we are still in the planning stages and have yet to launch the first webinar. If all goes according to plan, we'll have completed all webinars before the end of the spring 2016 term and will re-launch again in fall 2016 for incoming freshman and others who missed the first sessions. We have been invited to present another update on the project at the 2016 NASIG Conference, where we will share feedback from university faculty and students, as well as usage and download statistics gathered from the webinars and the toolkit website.

We are excited about this collaboration. Information literacy is an integral part of the student and researcher experience, and it is our common goal as academic publishers and librarians alike to give our students and faculty the tools they need to become better writers and researchers.



Table 1:

FGCU & Taylor & Francis Group: Information Literacy Toolkit	
<i>Building Blocks of Publishing & Research: Locating and Using Information.</i>	During this session, attendees will learn about the importance of scholarly research. FGCU faculty and representatives from the Taylor & Francis Group will provide information on using content in research papers and scholarly publishing. Taylor & Francis will also give a live demonstration their online content platform, Taylor & Francis Online, including tips on how to use the browse and citation search functionality, new enhancements and future functionality to the platform, and more.
<i>Publishing in Academic Journals.</i>	a) The Authors' View (Three things authors are worried about when publishing in a journal) b) How to choose where to publish c) How to write your article d) What happens in peer review
<i>Understanding Peer Review.</i>	During this session, we'll answer all your questions about the peer review process, from what to expect from the review process to understanding the different types of peer review options and models.
<i>Open Access: What Does It Mean For You.</i>	Open access journals and hybrid journals - what are the models? What has been published so far with Taylor & Francis and can be converted to open access publications? This presentation will explore 'what is Open Access (OA)?' and how Taylor & Francis is involved in OA. Points covered will include: an introduction to Open Access publishing and how it came to fruition; publishing in an Open Access journal; Taylor & Francis' Open policies and journals program.
<i>Author Rights & Repositories.</i>	Author rights are the rights granted by the copyright in any original written work. Learn about what rights are part of a copyright, and how copyright transfers made to publishers affect those rights. Learn how the rights some publishers grant back permit wider dissemination of works in an institutional repository, as well as how to ask for the rights you need to share your work.
<i>Promoting your work: How to Maximize the Impact of your Research.</i>	Becoming a published author is something worth talking about. We'll provide tips and information on how and why you need to promote your research after it's been published in a book or journal.

Endnotes

¹ "General Education Goals & Objectives," Florida Gulf Coast University, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.fgcu.edu/General_Education/files/3-GEN_ED_MIS-SION_AND_GOALS.PDF

² "General Information on the Reaffirmation Process," Southern Association of Colleges and

Schools commission on Colleges, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.sacscoc.org/genac-cproc.asp>

³ "The New Quality Enhancement Plan for FGCU," Florida Gulf Coast University, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.fgcu.edu/QEP/index.html>



⁴ FGCUScholars Think. Write. Discover Quality Enhancement Plan," Florida Gulf Coast University, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.fgcu.edu/UndergraduateStudies/files/FGCUScholars_QEP_Document_FINAL_Narrative.pdf

⁵ "About CUR," Council on Undergraduate Research, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.cur.org/about_cur

